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Issued Monthly

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PART 16 VOLUME 2

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MASTERS IN ART

A SERIES OF ILLUSTRATED MONOGRAPHS: ISSUED MONTHLY

PART 20 AUGUST, 1901 VOLUME 2

Gerard Ter Borch

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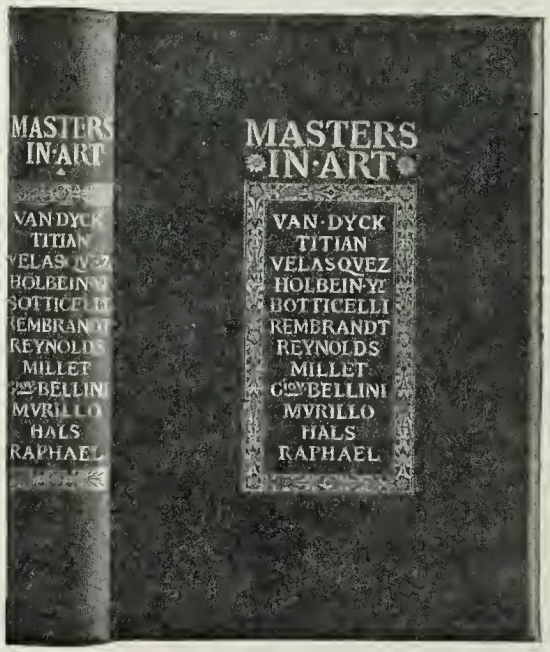

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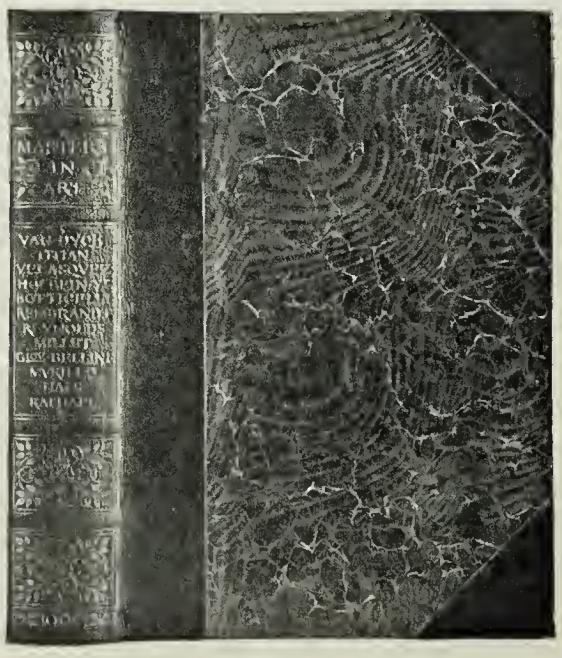

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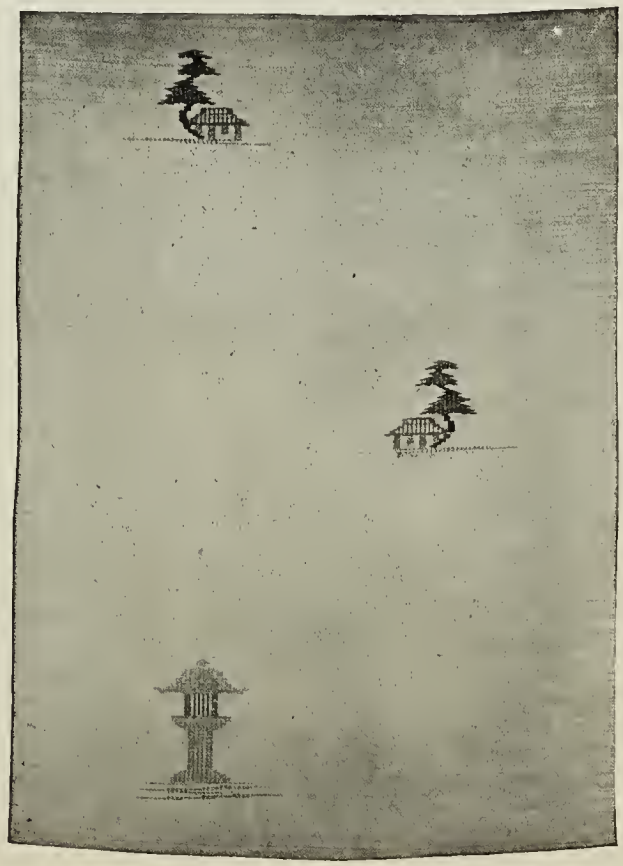

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MASTERS IN ART

Ter Borch

DUTCH SCHOOL

TER BORCH
LADY WASHING HER HANDS
ROYAL GALLERY, DRESDEN

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CIE

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MASTERS IN ART PLATE II

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TER BORCH

OFFICER WRITING A LETTER

ROYAL GALLERY, [illegible]

MASTERS IN ART PLATE III

PHOTOGRAPH BY HANFSTAENGL

TER BORCH
THE LETTER
BUCKINGHAM PALACE, LONDON

MASTERS IN ART PLATE IV

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TER BORCH
THE CONCERT
BERLIN GALLERY

MASTERS IN ART PLATE V

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TER BORCH

OFFICER OFFERING MONEY TO A YOUNG WOMAN

LOUVRE, PARIS

TER BORCH
THE DESPATCH
THE HAGUE GALLERY

PHOTOGRAVURE BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CIE

MASTERS IN ART PLATE VII

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TER BORCH
GIRL TASTING WINE
STÄDEL INSTITUTE, FRANKFORT

TER BORCH
WOMAN PEELING APPLES
IMPERIAL GALLERY, VIENNA

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TER BORCH
PATERNAL ADVICE
BERLIN GALLERY

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CIE

MASTERS IN ART PLATE X

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TER BORCH
PEACE OF MÜNSTER
NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON

PORTRAIT OF TER BORCH BY HIMSELF THE HAGUE GALLERY

When Ter Borch painted this likeness of himself he was about fifty years old. The face is grave in its expression, the nose long and well shaped, and the mouth is shaded by a moustache already touched with gray. Small as the picture is, — it measures two by less than two and a half feet, — the whole is so characteristic that we feel that we should recognize the painter in real life at a glance.

Gerard Ter Borch

BORN 1617: DIED 1681
DUTCH SCHOOL

ÉMILE MICHEL 'GÉRARD TER BORCH ET SA FAMILLE'

THE name "Terburg," by which the artist has heretofore been known, is incorrect. "Ter Borch" is the only way in which the name was spelled either by the painter himself or by his family; and we shall therefore, in spite of reluctance to change a form made familiar by long usage, call him by his proper appellation.

The family of Ter Borch originally came from Zwolle, and in the fifteenth century counted among its members a number of the magistrates of that town. The father of Gerard, who bequeathed his own christian name to his celebrated son, was himself the son of the Receiver of Taxes in Zwolle, and his forebears were without doubt people of property; for after he had received a sound classical education the elder Gerard left his own country to travel through Europe and to perfect himself by the study of foreign languages. For eight years he remained absent from Holland, travelling successively in Germany, Italy, and France. Always a lover of the fine arts, he devoted his leisure to the art of painting, which he had studied abroad; and from a number of his sketches which remain, it is easy to trace the source of his son's genius. Two others of his children also exhibited no mean talent in the same direction.

Gerard Ter Borch, the younger, was born at Zwolle in 1617. His future vocation soon announced itself in the most definite fashion, and his father's satisfaction with these precocious manifestations is evidenced by the notes that he himself has written on the boy's earliest sketches, which he carefully preserved, and many of which have been handed down to us. "Made in 1625 on the 25th of September by G. T. Borch the Younger" is the inscription of the proud father on one, and "Drawn by Gerard after nature on the 24th of April 1626" that on another. Even these boyish studies, showing faithful, if crude, delineations of domestic life and nature, mark the bent of Gerard's talent. A pocket sketch-book, which still remains, permits us to follow him in his youthful sketching expeditions in the environs of Zwolle, and shows with what accuracy he copied nature even at this early date. The

simpler subjects were evidently what most attracted him,—the thatched cottages, the farmyard courts with their sheds, haystacks, and peaceful horses and cows. He drew, too, the old walls of the town, with their towers and gates, and showed thus early a remarkable faculty of correct delineation.

Profitable as these studies were, however, it was clear that the little town of Zwolle did not afford sufficient guidance for the development of so unusual a talent, and Gerard's father, seeing that a sound teacher was necessary, decided to send the boy away. Where he went first is uncertain. We find an early sketch dated "Amsterdam 1632," but if he went originally to Amsterdam his sojourn there must have been of brief duration, and it was in Haarlem that he began his artistic studies in earnest. In Haarlem his father placed him in the studio of Pieter Molyn, an artist who at this time exercised a preponderating influence in the school of that city. Molyn belonged to that group of precursors who, instead of looking to Italy for inspiration, frankly turned to their own country for subjects. The pictures of his which now exist are so few that they do not afford us a sufficient idea of his talents, but from their subjects, as well as from the suppleness of their handling, it is clear that Gerard could have fallen into no better hands. No picture painted by the young man prior to 1635 is known, but the signed work called 'The Consultation,' now in the Berlin Gallery, bears his signature, "G. T. Borch," and that date. It is uncertain whether he was still living in Haarlem when he painted this work,—though his name appears upon the list of painters who were living in the town in 1635,—but about the middle of the same year he left Holland and went to London. Perhaps this journey was undertaken at the instigation of his master, for Molyn had been born in England, and had, no doubt, kept up his relations with that country. However this may be, it is clear from a letter addressed on the third of July, 1635, to Ter Borch by his father that the son was then in London. This letter begins: "My dear child, I send you the mannikin, but without the block which should serve as its pedestal, for that is too large and heavy to put into the trunk. You can have one made, however, at slight cost. Do not let the mannikin have too much repose, as you did here, but use it continually. Draw constantly, and especially choose large compositions with much action in them. . . . When you paint, treat modern subjects as much as possible. Have regard to purity and freshness of coloring, that your colors may harmonize when they are dried. Above all, serve God, be honest, humble, and useful to all, and your affairs will turn out well."

How long Ter Borch remained in England we do not know. Perhaps he did not confine his journey at this time to England alone. Houbraken, many of whose doubted statements about the artist's life have recently been confirmed by newly discovered evidences, says that he travelled also into Italy, France, and Spain; but the date which it would be necessary to assign to his Italian sojourn at least, and the absence of any convincing proof, make this doubtful. At any rate, several works and two small portraits, one of which is dated 1646, prove that in this year he had returned to his native country, and that for a while at least he sojourned at Amsterdam.

The reputation which Ter Borch had probably by this time made as a painter of portraits may very naturally explain why he decided subsequently to settle at Münster, where it is certain that he lived for three years in a house on the Neubrückenstrasse. A portrait-painter would find in this city a fruitful field for the employment of his talent, for Münster was then the political centre for reunions of many personages of note,—ambassadors, delegates, prelates of the church, and jurists, who came from the different countries of Europe to take part in the complicated interests to which the approaching conclusion of peace gave rise. Some portraits of this type he painted in 1646, and during his residence there he also painted the so-called 'Peace of Münster,' the most important of his works.

It was while living at Münster, Houbraken tells us, that Ter Borch came into some relations with the Count de Peñeranda, the Spanish ambassador, which resulted in a journey to Spain. In that country the artist was received with great favor by the king, whose portrait he painted many times, and who, in token of his consideration for Ter Borch's talent and person, created him a chevalier, and gave him a gold chain with a medallion containing his own royal portrait, besides other gifts which were for long preserved by the artist's descendants. Thus received, Ter Borch naturally found himself introduced into the highest circle of Spanish society. If we may believe tradition, his success was not confined to painting, and his prowess in the hearts of the ladies of Madrid excited so much ill-feeling that he was forced somewhat precipitously to flee the country to escape the violence which jealousy of him had aroused. It is unfortunate that there have not hitherto been discovered any traces of the portraits of Philip IV. or of the personages of his court which Ter Borch must have painted during his sojourn in Spain. And indeed no Spanish document has yet come to light in which his name is mentioned, or which can enlighten us as to his presence in that country.

We are no better informed upon the subject of the pictures and portraits which, according to Houbraken, Ter Borch painted in France on his return journey; and as to his voyage to England at this time, we believe that the same biographer has confused the second visit to which he alludes with Ter Borch's first stay in 1635.

At any rate, after these wanderings he came back to his native country; nor could his peregrinations have extended over a long period, for he had left Münster toward the close of the year 1648 and was in Holland two years later, as is proved by the fact that according to the vote of the council of Kampen, dated 1650, he received a gift of a hundred carolus as a reward for twenty proofs of the engraving of his 'Peace of Münster' with which he had presented that town. On his return to Holland he no doubt first took up his residence at Zwolle with his family, but soon after, on February 4, 1654, he married a young woman of Deventer, Gertrude Mathysen, the widow of a certain Thys Daems, and established himself in Deventer, where in the following year he had himself enrolled as citizen.

From this time on a new existence began for Ter Borch, a quiet life of constant labor. His birth, his situation, and his talent brought him into rela-

tions with the best society, and he became in some sort the accredited painter to the upper classes.

Luxury had followed peace in Holland, and the interiors of the houses began to be adorned with furniture and objects of value which denoted a growing wealth. In the main, Ter Borch is the faithful historian of these new fashions. Besides subjects of polite life, however, he painted many portraits which had a well-merited reputation among his contemporaries. He loved above all to paint portraits of his family and relatives, and in the Gallery of The Hague we find his own excellent likeness of himself. It probably dates from about 1660, when the artist was in full maturity, and shows him clad simply in black, with a collar of lace, gray silk stockings, and low shoes adorned with black ribbons. His hands are hidden under his cloak, and the long curls of a blonde peruke blow over his shoulders. His look is penetrating, his features calm and refined, his bearing correct, and his aspect on the whole so dignified that this portrait has been called 'The Burgomaster of Deventer,' though Ter Borch never possessed that title.

The reputation of the artist was now at its height, and the most skilful engravers of the time began to reproduce his works. When, in 1672, Holland was invaded by Louis XIV., William III., Prince of Orange, who was then occupied with the defences of the country, passed through Deventer, and the magistrates of that city, desirous of expressing their attachment, requested him to sit for his portrait to Ter Borch. William replied that he was far too much occupied with other things, but sensible of the compliment, he sent them his portrait painted by Netscher. The city, however, declined this offer, saying that they had in their own town a painter qualified to be Netscher's master; and finally acceding to their importunities, William sat for Ter Borch, who painted him three times in rapid succession. Unfortunately, none of these portraits has come down to us.

That same year, 1672, was, as is well known, a disastrous one in the fortunes of Holland, and especially for the Province of Over-Yssell, which the French troops almost immediately occupied. Perhaps Ter Borch wished to escape from the disorders which their occupation entailed; at all events, he temporarily left the province, for the word "absent" is at this date written opposite his name on the list of citizens who had charge of the municipal elections and the oversight of magistrates, of which body he was a member. He returned to Deventer, however, and thenceforward remained there, actively at work, to the end of his life.

He had no children, and his last years were saddened by the loss of many of his relatives. After the death of his wife, one of his sisters, a daughter of his father's second marriage, established herself as his housekeeper; but she died in 1680; and one year later, on the eighth of December, 1681, Ter Borch's own death is recorded at Deventer. In compliance with the desire expressed in his will, his remains were transported to his native town of Zwolle, where he was buried, amid a great outpouring of the citizens, in the family vault in St. Michel's church. His tomb is marked simply by the initials "G. T. B." cut upon the flagstone.—ABRIDGED FROM THE FRENCH.

The Art of Ter Borch

ÉMILE MICHEL 'GÉRARD TER BORCH ET SA FAMILLE'

IN the death of Ter Borch the Dutch school lost one of its greatest masters—"an original painter of the very first rank," as M. Bürger has called him, although I cannot go on to add, as he does, "and one quite exceptional in the school, who alone deserves to rank second to Rembrandt." Such numerical classifications in art seem to me not only hazardous, but inconclusive. I should prefer to say (this time in complete agreement with Bürger) that none among the Dutch painters is more indigenous, more Dutch in talent, in subject, in the manner of presentation, and in the character of his technique, than Ter Borch.

Some critics have attempted to trace in Ter Borch's works the successive influences of other artists—first that of Hals, then that of Rembrandt, and finally that of Velasquez, whose works he may have studied at the Spanish court, though Velasquez himself was travelling abroad in Italy at the only time when Ter Borch could have been in Madrid. Though Ter Borch could not have remained indifferent to the masterpieces by other hands which he encountered in his journeyings through Europe, I find it very difficult to discover in his works any positive indications of extraneous influences. Indeed, I know of no better example than he presents of the logical self-unfolding of a talent, or of a painter who arrived at his perfection by a more regular and uninterrupted progress. In the gradual development of his art we find none of those divergences, none of those sudden transitions, which are remarked in the works of many masters. Precocious in his beginnings, he seems never to have wandered from the straightforward path into which his steps were so early directed. His technique is self-effacing, and never reminds one of Hals's striking virtuosity. The equal and diffused light of his pictures in no way recalls the mysterious contrasts so dear to that great magician of chiaroscuro, Rembrandt. Nor could Velasquez have taught him that simplicity which marks the arrangement and harmony of his works, for, from his first beginnings, he had shown an extreme sobriety in the depiction of accessories and costumes, allowing the observer's attention to be led to and concentrated upon the faces of his models.

In his choice of subject, too, Ter Borch always remained thoroughly Dutch. Never attempting such academic compositions as seduced so many of his contemporaries, he merely looked about on his own environment and painted what he saw; and there are no more exact, sincere, and precious documents concerning Dutch society than his pictures. If he did not create the type of work in which he is famous, he at least excelled in it; and if he had rivals who are not to be despised, if he did not, like Pieter de Hooch, attempt varying effects of light, nor, like Vermeer of Delft, strive to compose harmonies which vibrate with striking colors, he nevertheless stands preëminent among them because of his extreme and straightforward sim-

plicity. Only Metsu deserves to be compared with him, and then only when Metsu is at his very best. Primarily a painter of the manners and society of his day, he seems not to have greatly troubled himself to seek for a wider range of subjects. Again and again he shows us the same models; oftenest of all, perhaps, the young woman with the blonde hair curling about her full forehead, her tip-tilted nose, her fresh complexion, and her red mouth. Indeed, we know even the contents of her wardrobe, so often has he reproduced it,—the dress of yellowish silk, that of garnet velvet edged with swansdown, the collar of pearls which so effectively sets off the whiteness of her throat, and, most frequently of all, the satin gown, which falls in such beautiful lustrous folds. We know her chamber, too, with its red hangings, its high marble chimney-piece, its little canopied bed that looks so like a sentry-box, its table, covered with heavy oriental tapestry or with a cloth of silver-fringed crimson velvet, its ornamented water-ewer, and the low chair, on which the favorite brown and white spotted spaniel lies curled. Sometimes we see her adorning herself, sometimes she is writing, sometimes playing on the lute. Sometimes, again, we watch her reading a letter, while its bearer waits for the answer; sometimes we find her in company with a young gallant who has called to talk or sing with her, and sometimes she offers him refreshments. In spite of the extreme simplicity of these little pictures, the calm, the very *intimacy* of them all, the exquisite distinction of their delicate, pure coloring of subdued tones in the clear diffused light, the excellence of the modelling, and the incomparable exactness of touch and execution combine to hold us as we are held by but a few of the greatest which art has ever produced.

Ter Borch occasionally painted more trivial subjects than these polite "conversation" pieces. 'The Smoker,' in the Berlin Gallery, 'The Musician,' in the Hermitage, 'The Apple-Peeler,' in the Vienna Gallery, 'The Mother Combing her Daughter's Hair,' in Baron Steengracht's collection at The Hague, and the 'Boy and his Dog,' in the Munich Gallery are examples of themes which he considered not unworthy of his brush; but one and all of them are of irreproachable perfection, and show with how little matter a painter of real talent may create a masterpiece.

Ter Borch has, however, given us more than one proof of his ability to do work requiring sustained effort and in an elevated style. His 'Peace of Münster' takes the rank of history, and stands with the greatest works of its kind. For his own diversion, or for a change, perhaps, he occasionally painted a life-sized figure. Once at least, in 'The Grinder's Family,' now in the Berlin Gallery, he attempted an open-air scene, and succeeded admirably. The critic would therefore be mistaken who should consider Ter Borch as a painter of polite episodes exclusively; for although his work was chiefly confined to such subjects, and although he made his reputation by them, his talent was not confined within these narrow limits, and in everything that he attempted he showed the same remarkable and constant superiority of execution.

Like his drawing and his subjects, his color and his execution were individual and his own. When he chose he could give unusual splendor and power to his coloring, but in general he preferred delicate and moderate harmonies of tone, graduated with exquisite art, yet invariably just in their values. He used paint generously, yet without overloading, and handled his material to make it resemble the very substance of the object depicted, so supple and varied was his brushwork. His touch was never dry nor hard in spite of its remarkable precision, but, on the other hand, he was never led into mere vain parades of skill, and would seem to have considered the juggling display of virtuosity as vulgar. All his work gives evidence of a clear and determined mind, served by an eye of subtlest power and a hand of absolute docility.

To him who values the art of painting as painting, the careful examination of Ter Borch's works will be a source of ever renewed wonder. The too carelessly applied word "perfection" is not far from its true significance when applied to his workmanship, and indeed it may be applied to every factor that entered into that workmanship; while the fusion of those factors is so complete and balanced as to make it difficult to detect among them one which seems superior to the others.

It is easy to name painters whose flight was higher than Ter Borch's, easy to name painters freer in method, easy to name painters more noble in intention; but it would indeed be difficult to mention any whose talent was better poised, more accomplished, or better suited to its own chosen expression. Without impatience and without fatigue Ter Borch seems to have made with equal steps straight toward the goal he aimed for; and he invariably attained that goal because he knew exactly what he wished to do, and had the power to do it excellently.

Were his subjects still more modest than they are, they would be no less captivating because of the knowledge and life that he has put into their depiction. Indeed, the expression of life in his works is so full and true that, not content with the admiration of them as mere pictures, many writers, Goethe among the first, have sought to find in them suggestions of more or less romantic anecdotes. But Ter Borch cannot be held responsible for such literary imaginations. The painters who succeeded him, Netscher, and his less worthy imitators Mieris, Lairesse, and Van der Werff for examples, leaned to the story-telling side—indeed, underlined the story in their works to satiety, and, as if afraid that something of their meaning or cleverness or subtlety should escape the spectator, overloaded their canvases with a host of intrusively significant and explanatory details. Ter Borch's works are, on the contrary, self-sufficient as they stand, purely as pictures. Indeed, any comparison of them with the works of those who followed serves to again remind us of the fact that he was the last worthy survivor of the splendid flowering of the Dutch school.—FROM THE FRENCH.

ARSÈNE ALEXANDRE 'HISTOIRE POPULAIRE DE LA PEINTURE'

IS Ter Borch, who to the tips of his fingers is so wonderful a painter, a great artist? His qualities are many, and fine, and rare. His coloring is harmonious, and yet often sober almost to the point of severity. His supple draughtmanship—so supple as to be almost indefinable—is capable of determining a movement, an attitude, or the slightest fugitive shade of expression on a face with the exactest precision. The subjects he chooses are refined yet sufficient, and of a type remarkably adapted to his surprising talent for rendering diverse accessories, such as stuffs, glassware, musical instruments, furniture, and the like. Finally, his powers of observation, though perhaps not adequate to extraordinary or emotional conditions, are sufficient to record subtly, exactly, and if coldly, yet with grace, the scenes he undertook to represent. His elegance of manner is incontestable; and so great is his skill and precision that it supplies the place of style in his works. Possessed of such gifts as these, we must at least rank Ter Borch high among the world's artists.

But to whatever final conclusion we may come as to his ultimate position, there are two points on which there can be no doubt: first, that he was dowered with a most admirable manner; second, that he stands quite by himself in the school of Holland. He is a truer historian than any of the Dutch painters who preceded him. He depicts the better class of that formal, self-satisfied bourgeois society which grows up in provincial cities, —elegant young women who are obliged to seek means of entertainment to pass their useless days away, who are rather sentimental than sensual, flirtatious than passionate; idle young men of good appearance and good manners, a little heavy perhaps, as was a trait of their race, *poseurs* because their education and fortune have made them so; matrons who have preserved some traces of vanished beauty; and respectable and dignified gentlemen, the notable men or magistrates of their small cities, too desirous, in spite of their ripe age, of appearing presentably to frown upon the extravagances of fashion. Indeed, in his own portrait Ter Borch shows us that he personally was not averse to being in the latest mode any more than were his models, with their square-toed shoes, their ample perukes, and their profusion of ribbons.

The interiors in which these personages move are well furnished and comfortable, yet without any special cheerfulness of aspect. On the gray walls hang black or dull-gold frames. The upright chairs are not made for lounging, yet they are not puritanically straight-backed. We catch glimpses of beds curtained with heavy drapery, tables on which are set out mirrors and the toilet articles of a woman of fashion, writing-desks with candles and sealing-wax and all the accessories of correspondence. Frequently, too, he shows us musical instruments, lutes, theorbos, citherns, or violas for use in the frequent music lessons, while a well-filled pitcher with its flanking glasses stands near, ready to refresh teacher and pupil in the pauses. Usually a table-cover of fine red tapestry forms the highest note of color in his pic-

tures, and this red is often echoed in the garments of his models because it goes so well with the gray of the interiors, the black of the men's coats, and the shimmering satin or velvet of the women's gowns.

How well he has depicted the good society of his time! How much better than any history of facts and dates! Why need we, then, in the face of such painting, depicting what we might call the middle tones of life with such admirable truth and refinement, ask for more? Why should we demand from this unemotional and minute but nevertheless charming and vivid historian that he move us as does a great poetical and dramatic painter? The question seems to me superfluous. Each has his sphere. By his excellent drawing, his velvety color, correct modelling, and his unexcelled facility, Ter Borch gives us sensations of pleasure which are not ephemeral. Moreover, his models are so well attired, so elegant, and so well posed that it seems impertinent to ask more of them. Indeed, their aspect hardly leads us to believe that we should find more charm in their conversation than we find in the sight of their beautiful hands, their flowing tresses, and the folds of their garments. Their gestures seem quite adequate to express their deepest thoughts.—FROM THE FRENCH.

CARL LEMCKE 'GERHARD TER BORCH'

IT was assuredly from Frans Hals, if from any one, that Ter Borch acquired not only the power of displaying unconscious traits of character, but the striking breadth and firmness of his touch. Small genre paintings, which, on account of their subject-matter, require to be looked at closely, should be finished neatly. Yet Ter Borch's touch is never petty nor finical. He was far too fresh and vigorous, and too fully absorbed in the spirit of the subject, to allow himself to be overruled by the technicalities of his art. . .

A good draughtsman, painstaking in this respect as in all else, a virtuoso in technique, a shrewd observer of character, he represents in a truly inimitable way those scenes in which in real life the gist of the whole turns on a glance of the eye, or a single word. In looking at a picture by Frans Hals we exclaim, "How that fellow is laughing! How wonderfully lifelike that girl is! How unspeakably true to nature those people are!" But with the personages whom Ter Borch paints, we say rather, "What are they doing? Just what are they talking about and thinking?"

A genuine realist of his period, Ter Borch did not seek for any unusual subjects for his "conversation pieces," but painted what he saw in every-day life. The simplest and most commonplace themes were enough to enable him to display his special powers. None of his personages lay claim by their beauty, wit, nobility, or other quality, to being in any way remarkable or unusual, nor does the artist ever give prominence to any characteristic ugliness, moral or physical. He holds aloof, indeed, from everything in the way of caricature or coarseness. It is in the close observation and spiritual conception of what is most usual in life, and especially in social life, that Ter Borch seeks and finds his triumphs, never showing any desire to

turn to account his experiences of an active, stirring life in court and diplomatic circles or in foreign countries. A few scenes in which a trumpeter is introduced as the bearer of a despatch or letter are the only reminders of the warlike and exciting times—the Thirty Years' War, the English Revolution following the execution of Charles I., and the fateful and desperate wars by land and sea in which his own country was engaged—experienced by the painter in the course of his life.

It is not Ter Borch's manner to make the spectator a participant of the scene he depicts. On the contrary, he likes so to display his characters that we seem to be watching them in an unauthorized way, whether they be dreaming, reading, writing, playing on musical instruments, or engaged in conversation. The very position that he so frequently and characteristically selects—the back turned to the spectator—increases the illusion. There is evidently something going on within the privacy of the four walls which is not intended for the uninvited, but this rogue of a painter gives us a forbidden peep, and we experience the charm that lies in the contemplation of those who fancy themselves quite unobserved. Sometimes he cleverly contrives to produce the impression that the people in his pictures have no suspicion of our presence by showing that a dog in the room—animals are said to see ghosts—is aware of the invisible spy. How amusing it is, for instance, to see in the 'Lady Washing her Hands' of the Dresden Gallery how slyly the little dog observes our audacity in watching while the maid pours water from a jug over the hands of his young mistress! . . .

Ter Borch's wit, truthfulness, charm, and consummate skill render him in all respects unsurpassed in his particular line. It was necessary that his subjects should be treated exactly and realistically, and this fact governed his manner of painting them. He wished to present them in all truthfulness, to show us what was going on, and not merely to harmonize colors; yet as a colorist he has always been considered as one of the most finished artists of that great epoch. Sharp and glaring contrasts he carefully avoided. The light in his foregrounds is bright, and he is fond of concentrating it upon a satin gown; yet his colors are delicately harmonized and carefully contrasted, while the shadowy backgrounds of his interiors furnish excellent foils.

Ter Borch's genius lies in the fact that there is about his characters something indefinable—something suggestive of the complications of real life not to be coldly formulated according to the prearranged theories of every learned critic, so that we receive the impression that on his canvases the very character itself is painted.—ABRIDGED FROM THE GERMAN.

FREDERICK WEDMORE 'THE MASTERS OF GENRE PAINTING'

OF that group of Dutch genre painters for whom the interest of a household scene lay less in the accuracy with which they could reproduce a fabric than in the finer fidelity with which they could note an expression and record a gesture, the most pregnant, the most fruitful, was Ter Borch, its earliest master. It is natural, of course, that the first keen and qualified

discoverer in Holland of this new art of social observation should have been an eminent painter of portraits; natural, too, that he should have been a man accustomed from the first to a society in which it was generally a gracious and cultivated character that expressed itself, now by voice, and now by gaze, and now by movement. The humors of the very vulgar, even the awkwardness and dullness of the lower *bourgeoisie*, would have had no attraction for Ter Borch, and had he been born amongst either the one or the other there would have been nothing to stimulate and encourage his art. But like Metsu,—nay, even more conspicuously than Metsu,—he had the privilege of such a birth and breeding as gave him entrance into what was pleasantest and most refined in the Dutch life of his day; and to live with his pictures is to live with no visions indeed of rare and admirable beauty, with no record of high endeavor or splendid passion, but with the counterfeit presentments of dignified dames and courteous gentlemen who take life calmly, who are engaged placidly with serious business, or in honest and happy recreation. It was necessarily with a subtle eye that Ter Borch observed, and with a gently ordered hand that he portrayed, the quiet life and reticent manners of the people of his world. To have portrayed them successfully, in their faintly expressed variations, he must have seen very much of them. With such delicate material for art, a stranger, an outsider, cannot successfully engage himself. Ter Borch was at home with it.

Ter Borch's genre painting ensured to him his permanent place, and his portraits, even his historical pictures, are those of a genre painter. With rare exceptions,—The Hague portrait of himself is one of them,—they are of strictly cabinet size; they were designed for the adornment of the limited chamber of the city house, and not for the decoration of the public gallery. We do not need to say that the portraits of Ter Borch, whether single studies, or richly varied groups, as in the 'Peace of Münster,' are great in many qualities of portraiture. He never so practised genre that genre made him trivial. Rather, it increased his observation; and as a whole he rises, I think, in the 'Peace of Münster,' to the highest power of which that small scale is capable, in recording varied character and the many expressions of men engaged upon a common purpose. He did nothing here in which he did not show himself to be a sober and a serious artist.

But it was in genre painting, and in genre painting of ample size, that Ter Borch had his best opportunities, and best used them. It was here that his skill in the discernment and expression of character found the fullest and most unfettered play. And considerable as was often the scale on which he worked, no spot of his canvas was empty of valuable record. In genre painting he was like a dramatist writing his thought out keenly, without fear of a censor; here he was really painting his very truest portraits, because there was no one coming when they were finished to say that they failed in this point or in that. In literature the novelist is often far more profoundly true than the historian or the professed biographer; and in art the vigorous and brilliant painter of genre has chances denied to the portrait painter, or chances which only the very greatest portrait painters are audacious enough

to seize. There was nothing apparently in Ter Borch's temperament or genius to place him—keen and serious artist though he was—with those very few who in their portraiture paint unpalatable truths remorselessly. Like the favorite portrait painters of England,—like Van Dyck and Reynolds,—he was alive to personal influence. He was a man of society, and such men, without conscious or palpable flattery, are swayed a little in their work this way or that. Far enough removed, indeed, from the less adroit courtiers or less skilled artists, they yet take only the best moment, and give only the best interpretation. And the result may be a thing of beauty, a thing of dignity, of grace, even of subtle and exquisite suggestion; but it will never be—for it has never aimed to be—a thing of plain, uncompromising truth.

And there are many brilliant painters, moreover, who will have done themselves but scanty wrong in bending thus to the exigency of their craft and place; for perhaps their own happiest expression of themselves in art consists in the unvaried and fertile production of work that displays a delicate sensitiveness to lovely color or a curious facility of grace. Their work is to all the world most attractive when they idealize or exalt. Only, there are also those whose true gift does not lie in the capacity for impressive stateliness or a dainty research of beauty. Their gift is rather in fine and subtle reading of the every-day visage; they understand not human nature in its Sunday best, but the human nature of the six days of the week. Ter Borch was one of these, and because he was one of them he was greatest in genre painting.

But the revelations of expression and character that most interested him were found chiefly, as I said earlier, in the best society. To this rule there are very few exceptions, and those few have been already brought into almost undue prominence. As a fact, he rarely descends below the comfortable *bourgeoisie*. . . . Far oftener Ter Borch invites us to be with him in the fine decorum of a noble chamber—a chamber largely proportioned, massively disposed, carefully tended; the cheerful hearth is flanked by the marble columns of the mantelpiece; rich hangings drape the walls and windows; pictures framed in the broad, deep bands of ebony, that best suit to our own day Ter Borch's works and those of his fellows, stand forth here and there; the spinet is open, and gentle fingers stray over the keyboard. Here there is perhaps a mandolin, there the now prized handiwork of some first fashioner of the violin. And in this apartment, built to last very long, and furnished for at least one lifetime, pass the scenes that are most often recorded by Ter Borch's brush, the scenes that revealed his world to him—that gave the very gentle stimulus he wanted to his slow but sure imagination.

JOHN C. VAN DYKE 'OLD DUTCH AND FLEMISH MASTERS'

GERARD TER BORCH, who to-day, notwithstanding his many modern admirers, is not appreciated as he should be, was, all told, the greatest of the "Little Dutchmen." He belongs near Rembrandt and Hals, at the head of the school. Such a position should be his not by virtue of his skill

alone, though he was one of the best of the Dutch technicians, but by virtue of his clear point of view, his artistic feeling, his strong grasp of character and fitness, his winning frankness. Moreover, Ter Borch had one quality that no other Dutchman, save possibly his follower Metsu, possessed. That quality was culture; and by culture I mean style. The oft-quoted definition, "Style is the man," is but a garbled extract from Buffon; and, as quoted, conveys a meaning just the opposite from what Buffon intended. He meant by style the final refinement of thought and method, the sifting and straining of all that is fittest in the local to make up the universal. The power of selection, the ability to discriminate between forms and methods, so that only the best shall be accepted, are its requisites. In itself it is an attainment more than an inheritance, and results from education rather than from natural gift. It is taste refined by education and experience. This is precisely the quality that Ter Borch possessed. He was the most cultivated of all his school. In Holland he doubtless studied Dirk Hals and the Haarlemites, Rembrandt and the Amsterdam painters. Then at an early age he went abroad, travelled in Italy, Spain, France, England, and studied the art of the different countries through which he passed. Not a trace of the influence of a single great artist can be seen in his pictures. Leonardo, Titian, and Velasquez never made the slightest puncture in his individuality. Yet he studied them all, digested them all, and while always remaining Ter Borch the Dutchman, his view was, nevertheless, modified by the views of others. His study produced culture, and his culture produced that selective quality in his work which I have called style. We see it in his paintings as in Raphael's drawings. There is nothing to add or to take away. Everything is well thought, well wrought, and well brought; of its kind the work is perfect—a wise mingling of the best feeling, the best form, and the best expression.

Undoubtedly Ter Borch's mind was predisposed by nature toward the refined and the elevated in art. He was an aristocrat in feeling as in subject. In his pictures he never laughs like Hals, or bawls like Brouwer, or simpers like Netscher. His men and women are well-bred, reserved, restful in face and pose; and yet full of sterling character. Easily, silently, undramatically, they work in and upon our susceptibilities. He is so simple with a chair, a table, a wall, and two or three figures that at first one is disposed to think him lacking in invention; but that very simplicity is his charm. His sense of selection and subordination tells him that a few well-chosen objects are better than a roomful of spotty bric-à-brac. He does not give an inventory of many things; he tells the meaning of a few things. What character there may be in a chair or table one may only discover by studying them closely in the works of Ter Borch. He is not trying to tell anything unusual about them. They do not "stand out," or have deceitful surfaces, or glittering lights. They simply look like a chair and a table in a room. His figures are treated in the same way. They have no pathos or humor about them. They speak only the truth of appearance—a truth without display or mannerism, and yet a truth so profound that it startles us when at last we fully realize it. Nothing but a mind great in its primitiveness could see such meanings

in the objects and people of every-day life; nothing but a most cultured method could ever make them apparent to others. Ter Borch had both of these, and they worked together in such unison, so unconsciously and yet so definitely, that they revealed a truth apparently without effort, and so simple that we marvel at its simplicity. And there in Ter Borch we have one of the most charming qualities in painting,—naïveté. But naïveté in art must not be construed to mean the boyish or the immature. It is usually the very loftiest mental attainment, the last word of technical maturity. It is to see the essences of things, and to tell them, frankly, sincerely, soberly, directly. . .

Ter Borch has a reserve quality that suggests great force held in abeyance. He knows what to give and where to stop, and he does it so easily, so frankly, so honestly, that we cannot escape the conviction that a master eye sees and a master hand records. There was also a master mind back of them. It is, after all, the mental attitude that makes a work of art. Ter Borch's mind was charming in its frankness, incisive in its penetration, synthetic in its workings. It grasped the salience of everything, sifted the accidental from the characteristic, and produced the latter in its simple purity. He saw truth of character in the refined and the elegant as readily as did Steen in the low and gross. Nature under his brush became filled with new meanings, for he saw that fitness to a designed end which nature stamps upon all her creations. And there we are around once more at the most virile quality of Dutch painting,—character. Ter Borch's work is an epitome of it. He saw it in a chair-leg as in a human face, and he told it in the most refined and cultured manner of any genre painter of his time.

There are few of his works left to us, but each one of them is worthy of long study. They are small and unpretentious, with none of the great sweeping power of the Italian pictures. They never touch the austere or the sublime, and have not a trace of the classic or the ideal. They are merely tales of upper-class life in Holland; but they are told with that simple faith and honest belief that make the simplest things in nature of great pith and moment in art.

The Works of Ter Borch

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PLATES

LADY WASHING HER HANDS — ROYAL GALLERY: DRESDEN

IN this characteristic picture we are introduced into a richly furnished chamber. From the yellow-curtained bed and the table with its Turkish cover to the looking-glass and the silver box upon it, everything bespeaks the high station of the young occupant, who stands in the middle of the room, turning slightly away from the spectator as she washes her hands in a silver basin held by her waiting-maid. The lady's gown is of white gold-embroid-

ered satin, and upon its heavy folds the principal light of the picture is concentrated. "Ter Borch understood how to transfer to his canvas," writes Houbraken, "not merely the features of a face, and faithfully to represent the character of any individual, but how also to reproduce the clothing and special stuffs each according to its kind. Above all did he know how to render white satin so delicately, so artistically, and so exquisitely that it seems in truth to be the material itself."

OFFICER WRITING A LETTER — ROYAL GALLERY: DRESDEN

THIS picture shows us an officer, of a fine and intelligent countenance, writing a despatch, for which his orderly, a trumpeter, is waiting. The latter, a man of large and robust frame, is standing with military erectness. He carries a rough broad-brimmed hat, and wears a jerkin of yellow cloth over a light-blue waistcoat striped with bands of black, and is shod with large cavalry boots. A wide shoulder-belt of green supports his short-sword, while from a tasselled cord hangs his trumpet.

It is a beautiful picture, one of the gems of the Dresden Gallery, simple in subject and straightforward in treatment, yet brimming over with character, and that indefinable quality which the much-abused word "lifelike" but inadequately suggests.

THE LETTER — BUCKINGHAM PALACE: LONDON

"THE charging of the human face with its fullest expression," writes Frederick Wedmore, "an expression chiefly with Ter Borch of weighty consideration or preoccupied reverie, was part of his task in genre painting; and in the royal collection at Buckingham Palace there is the picture in which with perhaps the most unerring skill he has fulfilled that task. It is called 'The Letter.' Charles Leslie has praised it, rightly, as one of the finest of all Ter Borch's works, and he was thinking, doubtless, not only of the consummate expressiveness of one of its figures, but of the virtue of harmonious and glowing color, and the charm of a touch here unusually facile and free. A blonde girl in pale blue bodice and satin skirt stands reading a letter; her companion pauses in her writing to listen, paying profound attention; a page bearing a chased ewer waits awhile; and a spaniel lies curled on the gray-brown chair. The expression of solicitude on the face of the older woman is the interest of the picture. 'A beautiful and tranquil home scene,' the little private palace catalogue justly calls this untouched and exquisite work."

THE CONCERT — BERLIN GALLERY

"THIS picture," writes Rosenberg, "is executed with wonderful delicacy and clearness of tone and exceeding beauty of color. It represents a duet between a young lady playing on a bass-viol and another seated at a spinet. It is strange that such an excellent draughtsman as Ter Borch

should have so failed in the relative proportion of the two figures, a defect which may be attributed to faulty perspective; but this is completely atoned for by the exquisite way in which he has painted the young girl who turns her back to the spectator. A deliciously picturesque figure she makes, with her dark braided hair and beautiful neck, her fur collar, her salmon-colored satin jacket and white satin skirt, all lit by the tender diffused radiance which fills the room. The whole makes another of those bits of reality which Ter Borch has so often painted—a peep which he has granted into the intimacy of a household, not only without a suspicion on the part of the models that they are being observed, but without any appearance of their having been arranged with a view to a preconceived effect."

OFFICER OFFERING MONEY TO A YOUNG WOMAN — LOUVRE: PARIS

IN this picture the painter has represented the interior of a room in which are seated a portly Dutch officer and a young woman to whom he is handing some pieces of gold. The man is habited in the costume of the period,—a buff jerkin with yellow silk sleeves, steel breastplate, gray hose, and large funnel-shaped boots. The woman wears a dark green jacket bordered with ermine and a white satin skirt. A table covered with a red cloth stands near, and on it are a dish of fruit and a silver platter.

Kugler says of this celebrated picture, "The drawing, the finely balanced silvery tone, and the treatment, equally careful and free, render it a masterpiece." In describing it Fromentin calls it "one of the finest Dutch works that the Louvre owns." "It has been said," writes this same critic, "that it is lifelike, that the expression is most true, and that the painting is excellent. Why excellent? Is it because nature is imitated in it in such a way that one seems to surprise her in the very act? Is it because no detail is omitted? Is it because the painting is smooth, simple, clean, limpid, charming to see, easy to understand, and that it is faulty neither from minuteness nor negligence? How does it happen that since the beginning of the practice of painting figures costumed in their ordinary way, in a fixed attitude, and evidently posing before the artist, no one has ever drawn, modelled, or painted like this? In the figure of the officer where do you perceive the drawing, so extraordinary in its naturalness, truth, breadth, and reality without excess? Can you find a feature, a contour, an accent, a single mark, which denotes the rule or measure? Those shoulders, diminishing in their perspective and curve; that long arm, resting on the thigh, so perfectly within its sleeve; that stout round body, belted high, so exact in its thickness, so vague in its exterior limits; those two supple hands, which, increased to the natural size, would have the astonishing appearance of being modelled,—do you not find that all this is poured into a mould which does not at all resemble the angular accents, timid or presumptuous, uncertain or geometrical, in which modern design is ordinarily enclosed?"

THE DESPATCH — THE HAGUE GALLERY

THIS picture, dated 1655, shows Ter Borch at the maturity of his talent. It was painted after the consummation of peace, when the Dutch officers had been released from active service in the field, and Ter Borch has frequently shown them to us at their leisure in pictures of this type. The standing trumpeter, in his striking costume of blue and yellow, has brought a despatch to his superior officer, who sits on a low chair with his arm about a woman, who, in the usual white satin robe, is seated on the floor beside him. The color scheme of the picture, with its strong lemon yellows in the high lights, contrasting with the brownish reds and deep scarlets in the shadows, is in keeping with the incident represented; and the picture is especially noteworthy from the fine handling of light and shade and the delicate harmony of its tones.

GIRL TASTING WINE — STÄDEL INSTITUTE: FRANKFORT

"AS is usual in Ter Borch's works," writes Valentin, "the subject of this picture is exceedingly simple. A young girl is sitting at a table from which the heavy cloth has been pushed back to make room for an inkstand, pen, and paper. These are, however, neglected by the writer as she sips from a delicate Venetian glass the wine that has been poured from a stone jug resting on her lap. In coloring the picture is equally simple. The eye passes from the dark wall with the brown canopied bed, the red cushioned chair, and massive wooden table, over the girl's gray skirt and pale yellow jacket, to rest finally upon the charming and luminous little face framed in its black kerchief, from which the blonde curls that play about the forehead, cheek, and throat have escaped. How white the neck is, and how delicately the light touches upper lip and little nose seen through the clear crystal of the glass!"

WOMAN PEELING APPLES — IMPERIAL GALLERY: VIENNA

"IN the simplicity of its subject, the exquisite harmony of colors, and the faithful reproduction of all details there is an indescribable charm about this little picture," writes Carl von Lützow. "The woman wears a pearl-gray dress and yellow jacket bordered with white fur. Her shoulders are covered with a black cape, the hood of which is drawn over her head and tied under her chin. From this dark frame the face with its delicate features and red lips glows forth cheerfully. The background of the picture is a wall of neutral gray, only broken by a door and a map hanging near, but stronger colors prevail in the foreground. On the right is a basket of white linen, upon which lies a cushion of green velvet, faced with red and trimmed with silver, used for lace-making. A cloth of brilliant blue covers the table on the left, its color bringing out into strong relief a silver candle-stick, a white glazed china dish of apples, and a piece of apple-peel lying near. The chief charm of the picture, however, does not lie in these outward things, but in the delicate play of light and shade surrounding the figures and divesting the

inanimate objects of their prosaic reality. Without expressing her eagerness in any demonstrative way, the little girl looks up from beneath her broad-brimmed hat, questioningly and expectantly, at the young woman peeling an apple, who, apparently absorbed in her occupation, betrays by no sign whether the little one's evident desire will be gratified or not."

PATERNAL ADVICE — BERLIN GALLERY

TER BORCH did not give this picture the name it now bears, but the engraver J. G. Wille entitled his reproduction of it 'Paternal Advice,' and Goethe, in his 'Elective Affinities,' described the painting from the point of view suggested by Wille's title. "It seems to me," writes Bredius, "that such a romantic name does not suit this simple picture, and that it would suffice to call it merely 'The Visit.' As I explain the situation, it is this: a middle-aged couple are paying a visit to a lady who offers her guests a glass of wine. While the woman is tasting hers, her husband, seated by her side, is engaged in an animated discussion with his hostess, who is standing before him, her back turned to the spectator, gowned in a robe of white satin which is painted with the greatest perfection. The master's talent is here exhibited equally in the skill of the drawing and in the wonderful harmony of the coloring, which, in spite of the vermilion of the bed, chairs, and table-cover, in spite of the sheen of the satin, is wholly tranquil." Replicas which differ little from this picture are in Amsterdam and in Bridgewater House, London.

PEACE OF MÜNSTER — NATIONAL GALLERY: LONDON

"THIS is Ter Borch's most important work," writes Michel, "and that which contributed most to his fame. Yet, although he set its price at only 6,000 florins, it was not sold during his lifetime, and after his death came into the possession of his relatives, who still owned it in 1721. We next find it mentioned as belonging in the collection of Prince Talleyrand, then in that of the Duchesse de Berry, and it was later bought for the Demidoff Gallery. At the sale of that collection it was purchased by the Marquis of Hertford, and after his death was given by Sir Richard Wallace, his heir, to the National Gallery, London, where it now remains.

"The picture does not depict, as is commonly believed, the final conclusion of the peace of Westphalia, but represents the consummation of a previous and partial agreement between Spain and Holland, made on May 15 in the same year, 1648.

"Standing in an apartment wainscoted with carved wood, the Spanish ambassadors and the delegates of the United Provinces are ranged about a table upon which lies the document of the temporary treaty, and swear to the terms which are being read simultaneously by the plenipotentiaries of each nation. It is an exact representation of reality; the artist has made no effort to force a picturesque arrangement, nor sacrificed truth for more effective *mise en scène;* but rather seems to have attempted to place his picture on

a level with the action by its simple gravity and sincerity, qualities which give it all the value of true history.

"There is no special play of emotion visible upon the very diverse countenances of the delegates. Here and there, perhaps, we may discover traces of mortified pride in the faces of the Spaniards, here and there a hint of satisfied content in the expressions of the Dutchmen; but, for the most part, conquerors and conquered remain impassive at this termination of the bloody national struggle, impressed with the solemnity of the moment and with the consequences of the act which they are consummating.

"Indeed, the solemnity of its general impression is so strong that in the presence of this picture one hardly thinks of wondering at its facility of execution or computes the wealth of talent which it exhibits; and it is only when one forces himself to consider its technique that he begins to appreciate the resources of an artist who in spite of so many difficulties still paints with such an air of ease and naturalness as to seem to demand no share of admiration for his wonderful execution."

The picture is painted on copper, and although it contains as many as sixty figures, measures only about one foot and a half in height by less than two feet in width. As a proof of the high value placed upon it by connoisseurs, it is said that when the picture was sold in Paris in 1868, the celebrated painter Meissonier travelled all the way to that city from Antibes, where he was then living, for the express purpose of seeing Ter Borch's masterpiece, and that after standing before it for an hour declared that he considered each separate head in the picture worth the trouble and time that his long journey had cost him.

THE PRINCIPAL PAINTINGS OF TER BORCH, WITH THEIR PRESENT LOCATIONS

AUSTRIA. Buda Pesth Museum: The Trumpeter—Vienna, Imperial Gallery: Woman Peeling Apples (Plate VIII)—Vienna, Liechtenstein Gallery: Portrait of a Man—BELGIUM. Antwerp Museum: The Mandolin-player—ENGLAND. London, Bridgewater House: Paternal Advice—London, Buckingham Palace: The Letter (Plate III); The Glass of Wine—London, National Gallery: The Guitar Lesson; Peace of Münster (Plate X); Portrait of a Man—FRANCE. Lyons Museum: The Message—Paris, Louvre: Officer and Young Woman (Plate V); The Music Lesson; The Concert; Meeting of Ecclesiastics; Learning to Read—GERMANY. Berlin Gallery: Paternal Advice (Plate IX); The Grinder's Family; The Concert (Plate IV); Two Portraits of Men; The Consultation; The Smoker; Portrait of Herr van Marienburg; Portrait of Frau van Marienburg—Cassel Gallery: The Lute-player; The Music Lesson—Dresden, Royal Gallery: Officer Writing a Letter (Plate II); Officer Reading a Letter; Lady Washing her Hands (Plate I); The Lute-player; Lady in White Satin—Frankfort, Städel Institute: Girl Tasting Wine (Plate VII)—Munich Gallery: The Love-letter; Boy with a Dog—HOLLAND. Amsterdam, Ryks Museum: Paternal Advice; Portrait of Ter Borch; Portrait of Ter Borch's Wife—Deventer, City Hall: Magistrates of Deventer—Haarlem, Municipal Museum: Portraits of a Gentleman and his Wife—The Hague Gallery: The Despatch (Plate VI); Portrait of Ter Borch (Page 20)—Baron Steengracht's Collection: Mother Combing her Daughter's Hair—ITALY. Florence, Uffizi Gallery: A Dutch Lady—RUSSIA. St. Petersburg,

HERMITAGE GALLERY: The Rustic Messenger; A Concert; The Letter; A Musician; Interior of an Inn; The Glass of Lemonade — UNITED STATES. CHICAGO, ART INSTITUTE: Guitar Lesson — NEW YORK, METROPOLITAN MUSEUM: Portrait of Ter Borch; Portrait of a Man.

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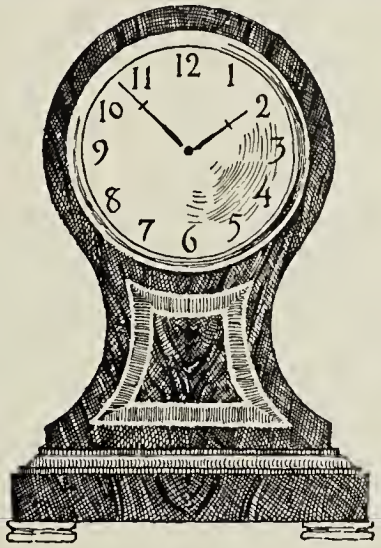

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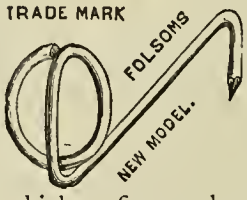

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